

THE COMET.

BY WALTER WILDFIRE.

HIS COURSE HE BENDS
THRO' THE CALM FIRMAMENT ; BUT WHETHER UP OR DOWN,
BY CENTRICK OR ECCENTRICK, HARD TO TELL. MILTON.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1811.

PULPIT ELOQUENCE,

FROM THE LOUNGER'S COMMON-PLACE BOOK.

The unanimated mode of delivery, too generally adopted by English preachers, has been often censured, and with *some* reason ; yet I cannot agree with those who would introduce the gestures of theatrick exhibition into the house of God.

To awaken mankind from the dreams of sensuality, and worldly interest ; to increase the influence of virtue by additional motives, and to deter the wicked by new terrors ; to enforce morality by divine revelation ; to convince our reason, and affect our hearts, are the great objects of every honest preacher of the gospel ; objects equally defeated by extravagant action, violent vociferation, or by his assuming the appearance of a statue, with head, hands, and eyes, immoveably rivetted to his text book.

Though the toil of an art should be discovered as little as possible, he who would *do good* as a divine must not let *a wish to shine* be his paramount motive ; he must adopt a grave simplicity, a well regulated earnestness of delivery, a deliberate pronounciation, a mild, devout, unaffected solemnity of manner, arising from a conviction of the important truths he inculcates. Nothing is more awfully impressive than well timed pauses, after any strong sentiment, or emphatick quotation from the inspired writers.

There should be no smirking, self-approving half-suppressed smiles, no studied graceful attitudes, no curvetting of the head and neck, no tossing forward of the shoulders, no prettiness of gait, no no regular intervals for adjusting band, dress, book, handkerchief and cushion.

The desirable medium between a ranter and a drone, it is easier to wish for, than to describe ; it must be the effect of good sense

and correct taste, on a temperate frame of body and mind, on a well modulated voice, a critical ear, an interesting countenance, and a chaste uniformity of expression and gesture ; and I believe in some instances is unattainable, even *with* these requisites, from a mal-formation of the organs of speech.

Many of these, it is true, must be born with a man, and cannot be acquired. Numbers of meritorious young clergymen, after long and considerable pains, have grossly failed ; while others, commencing their clerical functions, unprepared, and almost unpremeditated, have secured silent attention, and universal approbation.

He who could secure the occasional attendance of two or three judicious, candid, but *severe* friends, to hear him officiate during the first month of his entrance on the ministerial office would reap considerable advantage from their observations.

Bishop Burnet is said to have indulged in an undue degree of pulpit action, and to have been highly gratified with an indecorous mode of approbation, a sort of humming noise from the congregation, which was a prevalent fashion at that time.

This custom, highly indecent in a place of worship, provoked the censure of Bishop Spratt, the rival of the prelate of Salisbury ; he checked it frequently whilst he was preaching, and on more than one occasion, raising his voice, exclaimed, " Peace, peace, I pray you, peace !" The whig divine, if we may believe a tory biographer, less delicate in his taste, is said to have sometimes sat down to enjoy it.

Yet to applaud a favourite preacher, by voice as well as gesture, was frequently practised at an early period of the Christian church.

Vigilantius, though afterwards a backslider and heretick, could not suppress the raptures he felt on hearing St. Jerome ; he leaped suddenly from his seat, and applauded both with hands and feet, exclaiming at the same time with a loud voice, Excellent Father ! Holy Man ! Orthodox Divine !

It is also related on good authority, that when St. Chrysostome delivered his sermons, the congregation frequently waved their handkerchiefs and hats, and at a certain time cried aloud, " Thou art a preacher sent from God, the thirteenth apostle of Christ, the glory and honour of the priesthood."

Gregory Nazianzen once boasted, that *his* words moved the people, as the waves of the sea are raised by the wind.

The correct taste of the present age has banished this indecent custom from our churches ; if clapping were allowed, it would be unfair to forbid hissing, and thus the temple of the Almighty would be converted into a play house, or bear-garden.

The cushion-thumping propensity of Bishop Burnet, often excited the profane merriment of Charles the second ; he told him, on one occasion, as he descended from preaching at the royal chapel ; “ If my doubts were not removed by the force of your arguments, my Lord, I should be instantly silenced by the weight of your fist.”

The King had been irritated by the honest censures of Burnet, who thought it his duty, as a Christian bishop, to expostulate with Charles on his abandoned conduct ; “ The only means of extricating yourself from the troubles that surround you,” said Burnet, “ is to remove the croud of giddy and guilty creatures that flutter about your court ; nothing has tended so much to alienate the affections of your subjects, after the great loyalty and deliverances you have experienced, as the scandalous reports of your life, and conversation, which, if you persist in, divine vengeance will pursue you in this world and the next.”

THEATRICAL RECORDER.

No. IX.

Dec. 6. *The Voice of Nature—Forty Thieves.*

This interesting drama was played for the first time these several years, and much to the satisfaction of the audience ; which, though few in number, evinced their pleasure by repeated marks of approbation.

The Forty Thieves, though divested of more than half their original attractions, have yet sufficient charms to please the audience. Mr. Entwistle's *Ali Baba* and Mr. Dickenson's *Cobler*, added to Mr. Warrall's tasteful and magnificent scenery, cannot fail to delight the ear and the eye of every spectator. It is regretted that circumstances render the omission of many delightful airs and chorusses unavoidable.

Dec. 9. *The Stranger—Plot and Counterplot.*

Mr. Morse, after an indisposition of several weeks returned to the stage, and was greeted as *The Stranger* with a hearty welcome. He displayed a good conception of the character, and much pathos in the performance. He yet evidently labours under the effects of his rheumatism ; his left arm being confined in a sling. Mr. Vaughan played *Baron Steinfort* in a very creditable manner. Mr. Dickenson in *Solomon* and Mr. Entwistle in *my son Peter* were pictures of drollery. This play, though immoral in its tendency, is nevertheless very interesting ; and we think there are very few to which the present company can do such ample justice in performance.

The shame of conscious guilt, the bitter pangs of remorse, and the tenderness of parental and conjugal affection, which distinguish the heroine of the play, were feelingly portrayed by Mrs. Powell.

Dec. 11. *The American Captive, or Siege of Tripoli—The Quaker.*

The following are the characters of the new play, which was represented this evening for the first time.

Anderson,	<i>The American Captive,</i>	Mr. Duff.
Abdel Mahadi,	<i>Usurping Bashaw of Tripoli,</i>	Morse.
Ali ben Mahadi,	<i>His Brother, Ex-Bashaw,</i>	Drake.
Haccham,	<i>Grand Aga or principal Officer,</i>	Roberts.
Abdallah,	<i>Officer under Abdel,</i>	Clarke.
Suleman,	<i>Friend to Ali, in love with Immorina.</i>	Robertson.
Zephra,	<i>A Slave Driver,</i>	Lindsley.
Ishmael,	<i>A Jew,</i>	Dickenson.
Abdomelik,	<i>His Servant,</i>	Stockwell.
Jack Binnacle,	<i>An American Sailor,</i>	Entwistle.
Juba,	<i>Cook of the American Ship,</i>	H. Vaughan.
Officers, Guards, Executioners, American sailors, Marines, &c.		
Immorina,	<i>Ali Ben Mahadi's Daughter,</i>	Mrs. Powell.
Suphalia,	<i>An Old Gossip,</i>	Mrs Barnes.

It is written by a gentleman of Boston, and is prefaced in the play bill with the following advertisement. " This Drama embraces a subject which is calculated to awaken the feelings of an American audience, as it depicts some of the sufferings to which our seafaring brethren were exposed prior to the conclusion of treaties with the Barbary powers. The scene lies in Tripoli. The plot is not founded on any particular fact : yet the strong allusion it bears, especially in the fifth act, to the magnanimous conduct of

Commodore Preble and Gen. Eaton, cannot fail of making it highly interesting. The Drama being of *national cost*, party allusions are studiously avoided, and such sentiments introduced, as will be congenial with the feelings of every lover of his country."

The Prologue, written by the author, and spoken by Mr. Entwisle as a drunken sailor, and Mr. Dickenson as a ragged poet, was loudly applauded. It was given out for a second representation with considerable applause.

A more particular account of the play, remarks on the performance, and the prologue and epilogue, are reserved for our next.

FOR THE COMET.

"I hate these actors—it is meat and drink
To me to scourge them."

This seems to be the motto assumed by the writer, of *what he calls criticisms*, in the Comet. It appears to be his delight to censure, but never to applaud. I have had it in idea to notice him but probably should not have done it but for his very unmanly and unjust attack on Mr. Lindsley, in speaking of the performance of the Exile. As he appears quite ignorant of the nature and intention of theatrick criticism, I shall briefly define it. To criticise on the performance of a dramatick piece, is to point out the beauties and defects of the speaker in the character he performs. Thus—to say—such a line was well delivered, the passion justly expressed; such a sentence was deficient in pathos or fire; such a reading was fine; such an one incorrect; such an action graceful; such a sentence was given with uncommon energy and effect, &c. &c. This would be something like criticism, but indiscriminate abuse is very far from it—yet the ignorant, unfortunately, pretend to that to which they are incompetent. Few are capable of criticising, but all of censure.

But I shall not take, as is my wish, a retrospect of what has appeared relative to our subject, in every number of this miscellany, but confine myself to the one alluded to, above; lest I trespass on your patience or paper. Much has been said to the prejudice of the managers and actors of our theatre, but nothing perhaps so ill-natured and palpably undeserved, as what was said of Mr. Lindsley's

performance of Count Calmar in the Exile. I have no particular acquaintance with him, but know that he is a worthy young man, a native American, generally perfect in his characters, and appears genteel on the stage. The Exile was well played, and did credit to all parties, and no character in it was better sustained than Calmar, though the worst part in the play. No actor can possibly make any thing of it, if the songs are omitted, which was done because Mr. L. is no singer—not his the fault but nature's. He is a sound and correct speaker, and was better in the dialogue than Mr. Incledon whom I have seen play the part. Mr. L's Horatio in Hamlet was played as well as any serious part in the piece except Hamlet. His Frenchmen are also good. Mr. Duff's Daran was good acting, and the scene in the second act with the mariners, and the latter part of the coronation scene were very affecting. Alexina drew tears from her fair auditors, were she presents the lock of hair to Rimski. The entrance of Daran in the third act where Alexina despairs of finding a witness to the Empres's declaration of her father's pardon, was well managed and produced the desired effect.

LEANDER.

The following was received too late for insertion in the last number of our paper. We are sensible that an apology is due to the publick for engrossing so much paper on so trifling a subject. But we could not, consistently with the professions with which we commenced our Theatrical Recorder, refuse its admission. Its phraseology irrefragably designates its origin; otherwise one might suppose it was intended to *quiz* the gentlemen in whose defence it professes to be written. LEANDER will observe that it is printed true to his copy, with all its violations of grammar and punctuation.

In reply to LEANDER, we shall not attempt to disprove what he asserts respecting certain performances, though his opinion and that of the publick are as distant as the poles. To his charge of "ignorance," "delight to censure," and "indiscriminate abuse," we plead NOT GUILTY; and when he brings the smallest evidence of what he there "charges us withal," we shall be *ready for trial*. It would be folly to attempt a refutation of "seems to be" and "it appears to be"—*By and by is easily said*. It will not appear surprising to any man in his senses, that the opinions of LEANDER on the merits of his friend should be at variance with

those of every other person. LEANDER has kindly given us a definition of theatrical criticism ; for which *we are much bounden to his majesty*. But it is for writing according to his own precept, that he makes *this dreadful potter o'er our heads*. He is willing to say that, " beauties and defects " should be noticed ; yet the moment a " defect " is hinted at, he sounds the tocsin of war, and ravages the vocabulary of our language to find epithets harsh enough to bestow on the person who dares to notice a " defect," where it is as glaring as the noon day sun. Alas,

How hard is the task to admonish our neighbours,
When hatred's the fruit we receive for our labours !

To LEANDER and his friend we feel not the smallest personal animosity. On theatrical performances we, as a part of the audience, have an incontestable right to express our opinion ;—a right sanctioned by the custom of ages ;—a right which we shall continue to exercise, taking care not to o'erstep the limits of decency in language, nor suffering ourselves to be betrayed by resentment to the use of epithets unbecoming the lips of those who would preserve the character of gentlemen.

YOUTH AND OLD AGE.

In the morning of life, when the soul first makes her entrance into the world, all things look fresh and gay ; their novelty surprises, and every little glitter or gaudy colour transports the stranger ; but by degrees the sense grows callous, and we lose that exquisite relish of trifles by the time our minds should be supposed ripe for rational entertainments.

Man knows more than youth, having more facts in his memory, but he has not more aptitude to learn, more force of attention nor more capacity of reasoning. It is at the commencement of youth, at the age of desires and passions, that our ideas shoot out and flourish with the greatest vigour. It is in youth that those thoughts are planted, which often afterwards make men conspicuous.

ARTHUR MURPHY, ESQ.

Had a law-suit with Robinson, of Paternoster-Row, respecting his Tacitus, which occasioned a complete rupture between them. A friend came in one morning, and informed Mr. M. that his old

friend Robinson was dead.—“ Well,” he immediately replied, taking a pinch of snuff as he spoke, “ he’s gone, but not to *Pater-noster-Row*.

PIRON.

Piron has been justly characterized, “ the rival friend and terror of Voltaire :” his wit was inexhaustible, and his fund of humour without parallel.

One day, a very ignorant bishop, who was *not* suspected of writing his own sermons, met Piron, and addressed him with an air of great self-complacency—“ Well, Piron, have you read my charge to the clergy ?” No, my lord, have you ?

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

“ What do you ask for this sketch ?” said Sir Joshua to an old picture dealer, whose port folio he was looking over. “ Twenty guineas, your honour. “ Twenty pence, I suppose you mean ?” “ No sir, it is true I would have taken twenty pence for it this morning, but, if you think it worth looking at, all the world will think it worth buying.” Sir Joshua ordered him to send the sketch home, and gave him the twenty guineas.

IRISHISM.

As amusement rather than novelty and originality, is the object of this paper—we neither know nor care whether the following has ever before found its way into any of our miscellaneous papers. Whoever reads it will assuredly laugh, whether it be new to him or not.

*“ Copy of a Letter, written during the late rebellion, by Sir * * * *, an Irish Member of Parliament, to his friend in London.*

“ My Dear Sir,

“ Having now a little peace and quietness, I sit down to inform you of the dreadful bustle and confusion we are in, from these bloodthirsty rebels, most of whom are, however, thank God, killed and dispersed.

“ We are in a pretty mess—can get nothing to eat, nor any wine to drink, except whisky ; and when we sit down to dinner,

we are obliged to keep both hands armed : whilst I write this letter, I hold a sword in one hand, and pistol in the other. I concluded from the beginning that this would be the end of it ; and I see I was right, for it is not half over yet. At present there are such goings on, that every thing is at a stand.

“ I should have answered your letter a fortnight ago, but I only received it this morning. Indeed, hardly a mail arrives safe, without being robbed. No longer ago than yesterday, the coach, with the mails from Dublin, was robbed near this town ; the bags had been judiciously left behind, for fear of accidents, and by good luck, there was nobody in the coach, but two outside passengers, who had nothing for the thieves to take.

“ Last Thursday notice was given that a gang of rebels were advancing hither, under the French standard, but they had no colours, nor any drums, except bagpipes. Immediately every man in the place, including women and boys, ran out to meet them. We soon found our force much too little, and they were far too near to think of retreating : death was in every face ; but to it we went, and by the time half our little party was killed, we began to be all alive. Fortunately the rebels have no guns ; but pistols, cutlasses, and pikes ; and as we had plenty of muskets and ammunition, we put them all to the sword ; not a soul of them escaped, except some that were drowned in an adjoining bog ; and, in a very short time, nothing was to be heard but silence. Their uniforms were all of different colours, but mostly green. After the action, we went to rummage a sort of camp they had left behind them : all we found was a few pikes without heads, a parcel of empty bottles full of water, and a bundle of blank French commissions, filled up with Irishmen's names.

“ Troops are stationed every where round the country, which exactly squares with my ideas.

“ I have only leisure to add, that I am in great haste.

P. S. “ If you do not receive this in course, it must have miscarried ; therefore, I beg you will immediately write to let me know.”

POLITE HINT.

A Courtier, playing at pique, was much teased by a looker-on, who was short-sighted, but had a very long nose, of course,

put his face very close to his cards, when he made his observations. To get rid of so troublesome a guest, the courtier drew out his handkerchief, and applied to the nose of his officious neighbour. 'Ah! Sir,' said he, 'I beg your pardon, but I really took it for my own.'

NEAT PUN.

Dr. Roger Long, the famous astronomer, walking one dark evening with a gentleman in Cambridge, and the latter coming to a short post fixed in the pavement, which, in the earnestness of conversation, he took to be a boy standing in his way, said hastily, 'Get out of the way, boy.' 'That boy, Sir,' said the doctor, very calmly, 'is a post-boy, who never turns out of his way for any body'

COSIMO THE FIRST.

A friend of this gentleman decoyed into the palace, and delivered into his hands a professed and inveterate enemy, thinking to render him an essential service, to whom he sternly replied—*"That no advantage, however great, should induce him so grossly to violate the laws of hospitality, as to put a defenceless man to death under his own roof, though an enemy."* Who would not wish to call such a man his friend?

THE HAPPY MAN.

BY LORD LANDSDOWNE.

Happy the man, of mortals happiest he,
 Whose quiet mind from vain desires is free,
 Whom neither hopes deceive, nor fears torment.
 But lives at peace within himself, content,
 In thought, or act, accountable to none
 But to himself, and to the gods alone.
 O sweetness of content! Seraphick joy,
 That nothing wanting, nothing can destroy!
 Where dwells this peace, this freedom of the mind?
 Where, but in shades, remote from humankind,
 In flow'ry vales, where nymphs and shepherds meet,
 But never comes within the palace-gate.
 Farewell, then, cities, courts and camps, farewell,

Welcome, ye groves, here let me ever dwell,
 From care, from business, and mankind remove,
 All but the muses, and inspiring love.
 How sweet the morn ! How gentle is the night !
 How calm the evening ! And the noon how bright !
 From hence, as from a hill, I view below
 The crowded world, that like some wood does show,
 Where sev'ral wand'ers travel day and night
 Thro' sev'ral paths, and none are in the right.

FANCY. BY THE SAME.

Love is by Fancy led about
 From hope to fear, from Joy to Doubt ;
 Whom we now a goddess call,
 Divinely grac'd in every feature,
 Straight's a deform'd, a perjur'd creature ;
 Love and Hate are Fancy all.

'Tis but as Fancy shall present
 Objects of grief, or of content,
 That the Lover 's blest or dies ;
 Visions of mighty pains or pleasure,
 Imagin'd want, imagin'd treasure,
 All in powerful Fancy lies.

LOVE. BY THE SAME.

Love is begot by Fancy ; bred
 By Ignorance ; by Expectation fed ;
 Destroy'd by Knowledge ; and at best,
 Lost in the moment 'tis possest.

The short-lived honours, the evanescent glory of the professors
 of the histrionick art, have been thus feelingly and truly lamented
 by Lloyd—

“ Yet, hapless artist ! tho' thy skill can raise
 The bursting peal of universal praise ;
 Tho' at thy beck Applause delighted stands,
 And lifts, Briareus like, her hundred hands ;

Know, fame awards thee but a partial breath !
 Not all thy talents brave the stroke of death.
 Poets to ages yet unborn appeal,
 And latest times th' eternal nature feel.
 Tho' blended here the praise of bard and play'r,
 While *more than half* becomes the actor's share ;
 Relentless death untwists the mingled fame,
 And sinks the player in the poet's name.
 The pliant muscles of the various face,
 The mein, that gave each sentence strength and grace,
 The tuneful voice, the eye that spoke the mind,
 Are gone, nor leave a single glance behind."

SONG.

LIFE'S BLEAK WINTRY DAY.

Tho' my eyes are grown dim, and my locks are turn'd grey,
 I feel not the storms of life's bleak wintry day,
 For my cot is well thatch'd, and my barns are full stor'd,
 And cheerful content still presides at my board :
 Warm-hearted benevolence stands at my door,
 Dispensing her gifts to the wandering poor,
 The glow of my heart does my bounty repay,
 And lightens the cares of life's bleak wintry day.

From the summit of years I look'd down on the vale,
 Where age pines in poverty, helpless and pale ;
 There the sunshine of fortune scarce degn'd to bestow
 One heart-cheering smile to the wand'ers below ;
 From the sad dreary prospect this lesson I drew,
 That those who are helpless are friended by few,
 So, with vig'rous industry, I smooth'd the rough way,
 That leads thro' the vale of life's bleak wintry day.

Then, my son, let the bard of Glenullin advise,
 For age can give counsel—experience makes wise :
 Midst thy wand'rings let honour for ay be thy guide,
 O'er thy actions let honesty ever preside ;
 Then tho' hardships assail thee, in virtue thou'lt smile,
 For light is the heart that's untainted with guile ;
 But if fortune attend thee, my counsels obey.
 Prepare for the storm of life's bleak wintry day.